

Preparing for  
Hurricane Isabel.



U.S. Air Force (William M. Plate, Jr.)

# The DOD Role in Homeland Security

By ADRIAN A. ERCKENBRACK and AARON SCHOLER

**M**any experts warned prior to September 11, 2001, that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) would exploit weaknesses in the defense of America. A report by the Commission on National Security/21<sup>st</sup> Century sounded one such alarm: "The United States will become increasingly vulnerable to hostile attack on the American homeland. . . . military superiority will not entirely protect us." The subsequent terrorist attacks validated the commission report and the need to reexamine protecting the homeland. Moreover, they resulted in a reappraisal of the role of the Department of Defense in support of civil authorities. Among Federal agencies, it has the most experience in combating terrorism.

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**Lieutenant Colonel Adrian A. Erckenbrack, USA, is special assistant for legislative affairs in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and Aaron Scholer is deputy military legislative assistant for Senator Joseph Lieberman.**

One year after 9/11, the commission cochairs, Gary Hart and Warren Rudman, cautioned: "America remains dangerously unprepared to prevent and respond to a catastrophic terrorist attack on U.S. soil." And, as the Nation prepares for such attacks, so will terrorists. Though America maintains a superiority in weaponry, personnel, and other resources, terrorist groups can convert their disadvantage in numbers into an advantage. Networked terrorists can coordinate strategy and plans, execute schemes quickly, and outpace the cumbersome U.S. decisionmaking cycle.

## The DOD Role

The establishment of U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) strengthened the capabilities of the Nation to respond to terrorism. The command solidifies the DOD role in homeland defense and provides information to Federal, state, and local authorities. And it could do more by leveraging WMD expertise through planning,

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training, exercises, and consequence management to support the homeland defense mission. This is a break with the traditional practice by the defense community of getting involved in domestic consequence management only after events overcome the capacity of civil authorities to respond.

The defense establishment should not be the first responder or lead agency in preventing or detecting terrorism but should assist organizations tasked to respond. It alone has the capacity to both improve homeland security on the Fed-

Existing procedures must be enhanced and other mechanisms developed to coordinate DOD involvement with first responders. These steps may include:

- making homeland security the primary mission of part of the National Guard
- developing a NORTHCOM civil support structure to parallel the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regions and National Guard state area commands (STARCs)
- broadening current policy in DOD Instruction 2000.12 and DOD Directive 2000.16 to require military installations and defense agencies to incorporate first response and consequence management organizations in terrorism planning, exercise, and evaluation activities
- working with the Department of Homeland Security to develop a telecommunications infrastructure to connect selected homeland security agencies
- expanding defense participation on both the Federal and state levels, developing more comprehensive interagency curricula at professional military education institutions, fielding regional chemical biological incident response teams (CBIRTs), and organizing consequence management centers of excellence.

The result must be improved prevention, preparedness, and consequence management on the state and local levels, enhanced interoperability among agencies, common communication and equipment standards among all agencies, and coordinated and synchronous response mechanisms. Such actions do not suggest that the Department of Defense should assume those responsibilities alone or be the lead Federal agency but that it should coordinate with the Department of Homeland Security and supporting organizations.

### Strategic Planning

It is essential to develop a plan to defend and secure the homeland. By definition it should include the objectives of the Secretary of Defense for operations needed to meet the requirements of homeland defense and security. Such a plan would guide development of supporting operational and tactical planning and facilitate coordination of strategic priorities and resource allocation on the national level. It must seek to link homeland defense and security goals to NORTHCOM and DHS planning. Absent an overarching plan, the unified commands and services should rely on policies, regulations, and other issuances from organizations with disparate responsibilities and perspectives to safeguard their personnel and facilities as well as assist the civil authorities.

To address the threat of domestic and transnational terrorism, this plan must be national and international in scope. It should integrate homeland defense and security planning with state and local authorities at home as well as

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eral, state, and local levels and respond to chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or large explosive events. For the Nation to become more secure as a result of NORTHCOM activities, the conventional homeland defense paradigm of response must give way to a new model that includes both prevention and preparedness.

To date the Secretary of Defense has specifically referred to DOD involvement as homeland *defense* rather than homeland *security*—signifying more than a semantic difference. Defense implies deterrence and/or response whereas security is more comprehensive; defense is part of security but not the only part. This distinction avoids having the Pentagon become embroiled in an ill-defined mission as capstone agency for Federal, state, and local police and first response agencies. The Department of Defense is not prepared, willing, or in some cases constitutionally permitted to play that role. Yet because agencies that must respond to the consequences of an attack using weapons of mass destruction need resources now instead of after another terrorist attack, the DOD mission must be expanded from just defending the homeland to supporting homeland security, especially since a future attack could inflict more casualties than were suffered on 9/11.

### Support Planning

A strategic support plan should be developed to meet the challenges of homeland defense and security. While emphasizing defense, it should also be focused on security objectives to support state and local authorities, in some cases with extant defense organizations, resources, and policies. The plan should provide a strategic vision and endstate, be coordinated with both Mexico and Canada, focus NORTHCOM activities by providing clear goals, be linked to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and work in partnership with other Federal and state agencies.



20th Communications Squadron (Josef Cole)

Antiterrorist exercise.

in Mexico and Canada. This approach will address existing shortcomings and provide comprehensive responses to threats such as smallpox, which can spread rapidly beyond boundaries.

The plan must be accompanied by a concept development and experimentation process that will allocate forces and resources and develop both joint and service mission essential task lists. This process will be valuable for the Army and Air National Guard, which are expected to assume responsibilities for homeland defense and supporting security.

### Reserve Components

With the decline of the homeland protection role in the last century, the military became increasingly expeditionary, applying its power abroad to deter foreign threats to national interests. Turning back to homeland defense, it is critical for the Armed Forces to maintain their expeditionary character. But securing the Nation is a fundamental mission that the Reserve components must be reorganized, trained, and equipped to accomplish.

The Army and Air National Guard are best suited for a homeland defense and security role. These two Reserve components have deep roots in their local communities. Furthermore, because most state adjutants general also serve as both emergency manager and homeland security director, they are engaged in intragovernmental issues as well as Federal and interagency matters. Operating outside existing arrangements or establishing new organizations that replicate those efforts would add bureaucracy, increase turf battles, and decrease efficiency on the state level.

Homeland defense is not a new mission for the National Guard, but it must be expanded to

include appropriate organizational structures and added resources. In addition, it must plan, train, and conduct exercises with agencies that respond to chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or large explosive events. NORTHCOM, working with state adjutants general, should develop a plan to address concept development and validation of homeland defense roles and missions. The plan must also move assets from geographic support to assist in homeland defense and security. While reorienting a portion of the National Guard is a departure from current thinking and operations, it reflects the changing national security environment.

The Quadrennial Defense Review issued in 2001 concluded that defending America was the primary DOD mission and that policy would evolve accordingly. NORTHCOM was designated to provide unity of command for this mission, but there are significant problems because capabilities intended to defend the homeland and support civil authorities were developed for fighting overseas. Thus the command must first be configured to better leverage existing organizational structures.

### Command Restructuring

Central to the success of U.S. Northern Command in providing timely, appropriate support to civil authorities is the development of a command and control structure that reaches *down* to state level while reaching *out* to other Federal agencies. The purpose of this structure is not to exercise command and control as lead agency but to facilitate coordination. NORTHCOM can leverage several organizations. One is the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which deals with consequence management through ten regional offices covering most of the NORTHCOM area of responsibility. Within those regions, STARCs can be tasked and organized to help oversee training regimes and standardize requirements, develop common terminology, and synchronize the efforts of state and local first responders—a million firefighters, half a million local police, and 150,000 emergency medical workers. In addition, there are numerous active duty service installations in each of these FEMA regions and STARCs that currently conduct anti-terrorism planning, training, exercises, and evaluations. It is imperative that the National Guard and first responders take part in all critical planning, training, and evaluation in their locales. This would often incur no extra funding, but it would require thinking differently. By looking beyond the perimeter of the installation and the



USCGC Bainbridge in  
New York harbor.



U.S. Coast Guard (Tom Spenduto)

military as a whole and by incorporating the efforts and resources of many agencies into plans, exercises, and evaluations, the Department of Defense can significantly improve first responder capabilities. This will decrease the likelihood that the department will have to provide first response to a local incident.

### Policy and Directives

DOD Directive 2000.12 establishes responsibilities for antiterrorism/force protection while DOD Instruction 2000.16 sets antiterrorism standards. Both issuances apply to physical security for activities overseas and at home, but their scope must be expanded to include Federal, state, and local agencies in antiterrorism planning, training, and exercises. Extending these authorities across the Department of Defense will be a major step in improving interoperability and capabilities.

Moreover, many commanders are unaware of their responsibilities to respond to civilian requests for emergency assistance based on DOD Directive 3025.15, "Military Assistance to Civil Authorities." The Secretary of Defense retains approval authority for support to civil authorities involving the use of commander-assigned forces, which would include any personnel or assets that might be used in a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or large explosive event in the United States. This issuance gives commanders

immediate emergency response authority to save lives, prevent human suffering, or mitigate property damage under imminently serious conditions. Commanders who receive verbal requests from civil authorities during an exigent emergency may initiate informal planning and immediately respond under the directive. This information should be incorporated in professional military education, starting with courses for junior officers, and also disseminated to civil authorities on all levels.

Once NORTHCOM has broadened its antiterrorism policy to include functional prevention and preparedness activities that are paired with an organizational structure designed to best support civil authorities, it must communicate its changed regulations and standing directives to all Federal, state, and local homeland security agencies.

### Connecting the Dots

While first responders must be integral to network-centric warfare, the current state of play suggests that is not the case. One way to rectify this situation is the better use of the defense message system, a telecommunications capability based on off-the-shelf commercial products.

The system can provide secure, accountable, reliable writer-to-reader electronic messaging for

both institutional and individual users. It replaced AUTODIN as well as other disparate e-mail systems within the Department of Defense. The user-friendly X.400-based messaging system, which resembles a common e-mail application, handles classified information with high-assurance message security and delivery capability. The defense message system also provides global X.500 directory services and supports transmission of digital files containing graphics, photo imagery, and video. The system has been designed to use interoperable commercial hardware and software.

Another option is supporting the effort by the National Guard Bureau to optimize GuardNet for homeland defense and security. Although not

as capable as the defense message system, it was useful for limited long-distance communications on 9/11 when phone lines became unavailable. Regardless of which system is selected,

it must enable numerous Federal, state, and local agencies to exchange information, and it must serve as an alternate secure means of communication during a crisis. NORTHCOM must also help open interagency communication pipelines and develop manning for liaison elements within selected Federal and state agencies.

### Expanding the Mission

The Department of Defense lacks domestic WMD prevention or consequence management interoperability to deal with a real asymmetric threat. Accordingly, it must expand its interagency role through education, exercises, and training. To foster interoperability, cooperation, and jointness, the defense presence in the interagency process could be increased by assigning more personnel to liaison offices in FEMA regions. Emergency preparedness liaison offices assist in planning and coordination with state authorities, local jurisdictions, and integrated training and exercises. Coordination should not be limited to consequence management but should include prevention and preparedness activities with Federal, state, and local agencies. Members of both the active and Reserve components should staff these liaison elements. To expand the number and type of National Guard personnel in full-time positions may require a change in the authority for Federally financed, state-controlled National Guard activities.

Another way to foster interagency coordination involves providing the same type of DOD liaison to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which is responsible for antiterrorist crisis management. Finally, liaison officers could be assigned to state emergency operations centers. Terrorists are most likely to target infrastructure to overwhelm preemption and consequence management capacities. Such an attack may be designed to provoke Federal, state, and local responses simultaneously. The Department of Defense must be prepared on every level (its first responders will be on the installation level) to participate in a joint interagency task force made up of multiple Federal, state, and local agencies. Training for such events can occur in both military schools and installations across the country or at National Guard training centers—existing assets that can be economically expanded to support realistic interagency planning, training, and exercising with first responders, law enforcement agencies, active duty personnel, and all levels of government. Optimally, the Department of Defense must develop this capability until it becomes second nature to both the installation force protection officer and the joint staff officer in any organization. A special focus of any expansion of the defense role in the interagency process must be the knowledge of actions to be taken in a chemical or biological environment.

A natural adjunct to DOD efforts would be a training academy under the Department of Homeland Security for first responders and continuing education of officials in appropriate agencies and organizations.

### A Chemical/Biological Initiative

One key assumption about a catastrophic terrorist attack is that defense and response begin on the local level and that sufficient Federal and state assistance will not arrive for hours or days. Given current assets, state and local law enforcement, emergency response, and medical services may collapse quickly. The Department of Defense can decrease the time required to identify, react, and contain a chemical or biological attack, provide a multilayered national crisis response capability, and decrease the scope and length of any commitment. Any such initiative must:

- develop and integrate disease diagnosis and reporting with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- create CBIRTs to improve the national chemical and biological response capability and create consequence management centers of excellence
- broaden participation of Federal, state, and local prevention, preparedness, and consequence management under the revised emergency management standard of the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations

## **NORTHCOM must also help open interagency communication pipelines and develop manning for liaison elements**

F-16 patrolling  
American skies,  
Noble Eagle.



- help implement a laboratory response network for bioterrorism

- review and recommend changes to Federal, state, and local contingency plans to integrate installations, facilities, and personnel in the movement, security, and distribution of national pharmaceutical stockpile packages.

### Detection and Warning

For the Department of Defense to help civil authorities identify and contain the spread of any contagion, it must improve its disease surveillance detection systems and the way it communicates indication and warning of pending attack, confirmation of an attack in progress, and details of a past attack to partners. Currently, sources of data for both defense and public health surveillance are as varied as the diseases and conditions themselves. Because there are multiple data sources, information requirements, distinct users, and private and governmental partners with whom the Department of Defense may collaborate in obtaining data for specific program areas, there is no single syndromic surveillance system that captures information required to monitor the health of DOD personnel and share it with the Centers for Disease Control.

To meet this need, the defense community must be integrated into the national electronic disease surveillance system or something like the health alert network or a parallel system. When completed, the system will electronically link a

variety of syndromic surveillance activities and facilitate more accurate and timely reporting of disease information to the Centers for Disease Control. It will include data standards, an Internet-based communications infrastructure built on industry standards, and agreements on data access and sharing, burden reduction, and confidentiality. This type of system would provide information crucial to monitoring the health of DOD personnel, identify their health problems and priorities, help the department take actions to prevent further illness, assist in evaluating the actions, and serve as a collaborative means of monitoring syndromic trends in other parts of the country.

### Consequence Management

The concept for chemical biological incident response teams grew out of the chemical biological incident response force (CBIRF), formed in 1996 in response to Presidential Decision Directive 39. The Marine Corps organized this self-contained unit of 375 marines and sailors that can counter chemical/biological terrorist threats.

When directed, this force can rapidly respond to chemical or biological threats. Once deployed, it coordinates initial relief efforts, security, detection, identification, expert medical



*USNS Comfort*  
in New York harbor,  
September 18, 2001.



U.S. Navy (Aaron Peterson)

advice, and limited decontamination of personnel and equipment. Although this unit can perform its primary missions, the scale of a potential biological terrorist attack has expanded the scope of the required response.

The level of response being considered must be able to deal with a threat similar in size and scope to that portrayed in the biological terrorism exercise, Dark Winter. In that scenario, the effects of a terrorist attack using smallpox encompassed

a multistate region and rapidly overwhelmed the Federal, state, and local consequence management response. Under this scenario, CBIRF would respond with critical resources as needed, but its

capabilities in security, detection, identification, expert medical advice, and limited decontamination would be quickly overwhelmed. Indeed, even multiple units would be insufficient to manage a terrorist attack like the one in the exercise.

Part of the solution is lending DOD expertise to planning, training, exercises, detection, and medical operations in a contaminated environment and providing WMD response and management capabilities alongside Federal, state, and

local agencies with first response missions and requirements. In effect, although no single organization would be responsible for responding to an event on the scale of Dark Winter, contributing such expertise will improve the capability to prevent an incident from reaching a supercritical magnitude, while decreasing the probability that the Department of Defense will be required to respond in the first instance.

To achieve this objective, the best option would be embedding a more capable prevention, detection, and consequence management capacity in the National Guard. It must develop chemical biological incident response teams, determine their appropriate size and equipment, and provide transport for five or six strategically located regional teams, each within four hours flying time of any point in its area of responsibility. That would enhance the capability to respond to bioterrorism incidents that overwhelm first responders. Moreover, developing and pre-positioning teams in selected locales would offer a layered response (no mid-sized WMD consequence management assets exist between state and local HAZMAT units and strategic CBIRF assets). This would also reduce the distance over which response forces must travel in an emergency.

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The response force would provide regional consequence management centers of excellence. On a day-to-day basis teams would form centers to provide consequence management planning, training, evaluation, and exercises. They would also serve as catalysts by developing standards for equipment, communications, and doctrine among first responders. This phenomenon is occurring already, albeit on a lower level and smaller scale, wherever WMD civil support teams are present. While not originally envisioned as a DOD mission, a collateral benefit of civil support has been offering a credible and neutral catalyst in an environment that is often turf oriented. On a larger scale, while CBIRTs have not previously existed, there is precedent for providing such assistance to Federal, state, and local agencies.

The National Defense Authorization Act of 1997 required the development of a program to test and improve responses to emergencies involving biological and chemical weapons. To enable this program, Federal funding must support National Guard CBIRTs, including planning, training, evaluation, and exercise oversight to state and local organizations.

### Medical Support

To respond to the threat of bioterrorism, plans should be developed to increase the capacity of the Laboratory Response Network. The Department of Defense could contribute by enlarging the number of level-four labs and connecting them with Federal information systems to improve rapid diagnostics and report attacks. Such capabilities are located at the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Disease at Fort Dietrich, Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, Southwest Foundation in San Antonio, and National Institutes of Health in Bethesda. To decrease the time required for a sample from a suspected terrorist attack to be positively identified, the Department of Defense and Centers for Disease Control must improve existing facilities on the west coast such as the Madigan Army Medical Facility at Fort Lewis and in the midwest or develop new capabilities. If population density is a factor, then the demographics of California, Texas, and Oregon demand that level-four laboratories be located in these regions as well.

By locating more facilities in key areas, the Departments of Defense and Health and Human Services will bolster the number of qualified epidemiological experts, reduce the lag time between discovering and identifying an agent, enhance communicating diagnostic information, and improve the probability of containing a biological attack before it becomes pandemic.

To ameliorate the consequences of nerve agents, biological pathogens, or chemical agents,

the CDC national strategic stockpile ensures the availability of vital pharmaceuticals, antidotes, and other medical supplies and equipment. The program can rapidly deploy resources to any domestic location in the event of an attack involving biological or chemical agents. As part of its response, the Centers for Disease Control would transfer stockpile resources to state or local authorities who, in turn, would repackaging medicines and other commodities. This stockpile program was exercised in response to 9/11 when officials in New York requested large amounts of medical material and logistic support. With the support of state and local public health and emergency response agencies, the operation was performed successfully according to contingency plans.

The deployment of the stockpile package in response to 9/11 occurred in a relatively benign environment that facilitated its rapid and efficient transfer to the New York metropolitan area. Had the attack been coordinated with the release of chemical or biological agents—which can spread rapidly and contaminate or infect large numbers of people—and had terrorists interdicted or destroyed the package to increase mortality, the outcome might have been different.

With the arrival of a stockpile package, few law enforcement agencies would be capable of maintaining public order long enough to distribute vaccines under chaotic conditions. Ultimately, the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security must jointly recommend appropriate changes in contingency planning to integrate military assets into the distribution of stockpile packages.

The Department of Defense is not yet prepared to address the consequences of events that employ weapons of mass destruction or asymmetric attacks with conventional means. Detection and containment capabilities are limited in this area. Integrated planning, training, exercises, and evaluation have been discussed but not fully implemented. Most importantly, there is no common understanding of the relationship among prevention, preparation, and response. To overcome the ambiguities in its mission, the defense community must be able to immediately respond in support of Federal, state, and local authorities. It should expand its policy on antiterrorism by leveraging expertise in WMD to prevent any future act of terrorism. By so doing, it can protect the Nation and manage the consequences of an asymmetric terrorist attack.

**JFQ**